



Open for Public Comment:
Draft *National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change*

Simultaneous Launch of EPA *Climate Change and Water Website*

Dates: Signed by Nancy Stoner, Acting Assistant Administrator for Water: March 27, 2012
Federal Register posting: April 2, 2012
Close of Public Comment Period: May 17, 2012
Website launch: April 2, 2012 - <http://www.epa.gov/water/climatechange>

Highlights

- The National Water Program's Draft *2012 Climate Change Strategy* is being released on April 2, 2012 for a 45-day public comment period.
- We are simultaneously launching an updated web site that is designed to be consistent with the new *2012 Strategy* to facilitate stakeholders' access to a variety of tools and information for adapting to climate change.
- Climate change is changing our assumptions about water resources. As climate change warms the atmosphere and alters the hydrological cycle, we will continue to witness changes to the amount, timing, form and intensity of precipitation and the flow of water in watersheds, as well as the quality of aquatic and marine environments.
- These changes are also likely to affect EPA's water programs designed to protect the quality of water resources and the health and safety of the public.
- EPA's National Water Program is working in cooperation with national partners, state, tribal and local governments, and public and private stakeholders to understand the science, develop tools, and implement actions to address the impacts of climate change on water resources as well as to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
- The National Water Program *2012 Strategy* is designed to complement and coordinate with the forthcoming EPA-wide climate adaptation plan. Similarly, other parts of EPA will be producing their respective implementation plans and strategies in the future as well.

Background

- The first *National Water Program Strategy: Response to Climate Change* was published in 2008. It identified key actions that could be taken by EPA to begin to understand and address the potential impacts of climate change on water resources and EPA's mission.
- This *2012 Strategy* builds upon the momentum gained since then and is set in the context of a variety of efforts underway throughout the federal government, and in the water resource management community at the state, tribal and local level.
- The *2012 Strategy* describes the direction that EPA programs intend to pursue in order to build a climate-resilient National Water Program in five topic areas:

- Water Infrastructure
 - Watersheds and Wetlands
 - Coastal and Ocean Waters
 - Water Quality
 - Working with Tribes
- For each of these five topics, the *2012 Strategy* describes:
 - the long term Vision for protecting the nation's water resources, and that requires the collaboration of many actors to achieve;
 - the long term Goals for managing sustainable water resources for future generations in light of climate change that reflect EPA's role in achieving the Vision; and
 - the Strategic Actions - which are the mid-term building blocks - which EPA intends to undertake over the next 8 years¹ to achieve the long term Goals.
- The *2012 Strategy* includes a section on the geographically-based climate regions² describing how EPA Regions plan to work together as well as with State and Tribal partners to address geographically- specific strategic challenges posed by climate change.

¹ Eight years is intended to convey a sense of the realistic timeframe within OW program managers' foreseeable time horizons for the federal planning and budgetary process.

² Climate Regions are adapted from the U.S. Global Change Research Program climate regions